

2015 Urban Forest & Green Space City Council Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Pamela L. Banks

District: 3

1. Larger trees provide significantly more ecological value to Seattle's green infrastructure, by reducing storm water runoff, cleaning pollutants from the air, and providing animal habitat. **Do you support giving greater protection to large trees like Heritage Trees and exceptional trees? What measures would you propose to provide this protection?**

Yes, I do support greater protections for Heritage Trees and exceptional trees under the tree protection code. These provisions are especially important to protect Seattle's parks and greenspaces.

2. Seattle's interim tree ordinance protects existing groves of trees (group of 8 or more trees 12" in diameter). The Department of Planning and Development has proposed removing this protection. **Do you support continuing the policy of protecting tree groves to conserve habitat and canopy cover?**

I do support continuing to protect existing groves of trees and would encourage the Department of Planning to find alternate solutions to achieve their goals. Existing tree groves are important to both Seattle's environment and quality of life.

3. Deferred maintenance results in the costly loss and replacement of trees and landscapes. **Do you support funding for the maintenance of public greenspaces, including increased funding for the Green Seattle Partnership so that the goals to restore our parklands, greenbelts, and critical areas can be met?**

Yes, it is more effective and sustainable to adequately maintain greenspaces now than to replace lost trees later. I will fight for this funding as a member of the Council.

4. Seattle currently has a 23 percent tree canopy cover. Seattle's Urban Forest Stewardship Plan targets a 30 percent canopy cover goal by 2037. **To help reach this goal, do you support strengthening tree protection by requiring permits to remove trees on private property?**

I support greater efforts to protect non-hazardous trees on private property. I would work with communities to develop plans to protect existing trees when possible and to

incentivize options to replace trees that are cut down on private property with new plantings in public green spaces.

5. Seattle is one of the very few urban environments that still boasts an extensive, diverse, and impactful urban fruit tree canopy. Over the last six years, over 80,000 pounds of fruit has been gleaned from public and private property, and donated into the emergency food system. **Do you support funding to continue the maintenance of fruit trees on public land and gleaning of fruit from private property for food banks?**

Yes, fruit trees are an excellent way to support local food banks with healthy local produce and help to feed hungry Seattleites in a sustainable way.

6. Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Over the last two years, there has been a 25 percent increase in apartment building, which often involves the destruction of single-family homes that provide open space and trees. In 2014, Seattle reports that it has 5,546 acres of designed parkland plus natural areas. The Trust for Public Lands 2014 report places Seattle's ranking among the 200 largest U.S. cities as 188th -- that's 12th from the bottom. **What do you propose to stop this loss of open space, and to increase open space in the city?**

I would like to see significant investment in greenways and neighborhood parks. These types of projects add green space to communities and have the added benefit of creating safer pedestrian and bicycle paths, and more efficient traffic patterns.

7. The Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan calls for the addition of 1400 acres of open space by 2035 to accommodate population growth. **What is your opinion of this goal? What ideas do you have to achieve this goal? Do you support this goal and saving current surplus city properties to help meet this goal?**

1400 acres of additional open space is a big goal, but a worthy one we should try to achieve. I support the goal of saving surplus city properties to help meet our goal, as well as adding parks spaces and encouraging new developments to include more green spaces in their designs.

8. Currently, the Department of Planning and Development is responsible for drafting the urban forest ordinance. **Do you support the Mayor and City Council appointing a citizens committee to prepare a draft urban forest ordinance instead, such as the Parks Legacy Committee and Parks and Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee?**

Yes, I would support a citizen's committee to oversee preparation of a draft urban forest ordinance.

9. The Department of Planning and Development is proposing to reduce the current long-term tree canopy aspirational goal in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan from 40

percent to 30 percent. **Do you support maintaining the 40 percent long-term goal in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan?**

Yes, I support maintaining the original 40% goal in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

10. Trees and open space offer a number of community benefits: increased housing values; decreased rates of crime; offering protection against climate change; filtering stormwater run-off; and quality of life for communities. **Share with us your favorite tree or memory of an open space and why you support continued investment in these community resources.**

My favorite park is Seward Park, I love that we have this valuable resource which includes an urban forest with old growth timber in the heart of our city. For the past 30 years, I have walked, ran, hiked, volunteered and sat all over the park which has numerous trees that are decades old, I have watched trees fall and overtime turn into mulch or habitat for the fish in Lake Washington. I have spent volunteer hours removing invasive ivy to restore native habitat and save trees. I have watched Parks department staff plant seedlings and watch the trees mature. Walking among the trees and natural habitat is a much needed community resource for young and old. Our parks and open spaces are critical to keeping our city a better place to live, work and play

Please add any clarifications or comments you would like to convey to us regarding the questions above, or on protecting trees and the urban forest and open space in general.

Are you willing to meet briefly with representatives from TreePAC, at a time and place that is mutually convenient?

Absolutely, I would be very happy to meet with you.

Thank you for your participation!
Please return questionnaire by July 15 to treepac@comcast.net.